Homecoming ’09 offers alums CEUs, fellowship on oct. 10

Thanks to a generous, private gift, the Tulane School of Social Work is proud to offer its alumni a special Continuing Education Unit event to occur in conjunction with the annual TSSW Homecoming Reception.

The CEU event will be held Saturday, Oct. 10 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. in the Stibbs Conference Room (Rm. 203) on the second floor of the Lavin-Bernick Student Center on Tulane’s Uptown Campus.

The three-hour CEU event entitled “Forging new horizons in forgiveness therapy: Modernist models meet post-modern technique,” will be presented by Drs. Itzhak Lander and Roi Tal, social work professors at Sapir College in Israel which participates in a faculty exchange program with TSSW.

The registration fee for the CEU event is $35 for TSSW alums and $50 for community social work practitioners. Payments must be received before your registration will be finalized, and registration info is available via the School’s Web site at tulane.edu/socialwork.

Beginning at 6 p.m. that same day, the school and its alumni association will host its annual three-hour alumni reception in the James Lounge, located on the first floor of the Lavin-Bernick Center. The social event, open to alumni and their significant others, will feature hors d’oeuvres, drinks and music from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. The TSSW alumni association invites all alums to come enjoy an evening of fellowship, memories and good times on Tulane’s campus while enjoying a view of the new McAlister Place green space.

The reception will be free of charge to all TSSW alums and will feature the annual raffle to benefit the Tulane School of Social Work.

Dean’s Update

TSSW growth abounds in 2009

The fall 2009 semester has begun, and we have enrolled and held classes for the largest number of new MSW students since Hurricane Katrina. In the life of a School of Social Work, four years is not so very long. However, for these last four years, I know you will understand if I say it’s been a long four years. During this time, the School and the University have moved in many directions, strengthening its core programs and adding new ones.

This semester, 84 new full-time MSW students and 13 part-time students have confirmed their attendance, coming from every region of the country, some as far as California and several northeast states. Further, with an ever increasing applicant pool, we continue to be increasingly selective.

In my last Postscripts message, I was delighted to welcome our newest professor, Dr. Charles Figley, who has already received two substantial multi-year awards for the School. Dr. Figley will be the co-principal investigator for the development of a $2 million international disaster leadership management academy. The academy, when fully functional, expects to train individuals from various countries within the context of their home countries about what it means to be a leader.
Sternbergh to Lead Resurrection of CLL Program

Since Hurricane Katrina suspended the Center for Life Long Learning’s activities, there has been a need for CEU events in the social work community, but TSSW grad Parker Sternbergh (MSW ’05) has a plan to change that.

Sternbergh took over as the Assistant Director of the Porter-Cason Institute and Center for Life Long Learning in March, and since then has been feverishly working to get both organizations back on their feet and most importantly for the CLL, offering CEUs again. As part of that campaign, Sternbergh said both organizations will be moving to a more digital medium.

“By doing more digitally, we can get the most up-to-date information to our alums, and they’ll be able to register for events online in the future,” she said. “It’ll be much faster, and for us, it’ll make all of the administrative pieces like our certificates easier to produce. It is just a much more efficient way of operating.”

With upcoming CLL events in late October and early November (check your mailbox and the TSSW Web site for details), Sternbergh said she will be making a concerted effort to receive feedback from alums about programs as well as urging them to start opting to receive email correspondence regarding CEUs and their registration.

“We also are hoping to put together a Porter-Cason related CEU event in the Spring, and we’re going to bring back the ‘Summer Updates’ in June,” she said.

Sternbergh’s first career in healthcare and business gave her a keen eye for the efficient running of an organization, which will help her in her new position. She also took the test for her LCSW on Sept. 2 and hopes to work in private therapy—just another way she plans on giving back to the community.

But for now, she said she hopes increased alumni involvement will help both the CLL and Porter-Cason Institute focus on issues that are important to TSSW alums.

“Gaining feedback and increased participation will allow us to incorporate our alums’ suggestions back into our program. I think that our alumni teach us too because part of a strong graduate program has to do with the strength of our alumni and drawing on that strength.”

For more information about upcoming CEU events, visit the TSSW Web site at tulane.edu/socialwork.

Continued from Page 1....

Dean’s Message: 2009 Admissions Meet Pre-Katrina Numbers

During a disaster, Dr. Figley will also serve as the co-principal investigator on a three-year, $600,000 research project to interview active duty medics serving in Afghanistan and Iraq to determine the distinguishing characteristics that enable their resilience and well being.

The School is now home to Sage Publisher’s Journal of Traumatology, which Dr. Figley edits. The December issue, which I co-edited, focused on lessons learned from Hurricane Katrina featuring several articles by our faculty including Professors Judy Lewis, Jane Parker, Richard Ager, Rebecca Chaisson and myself. The publishing record of our faculty, like our new student enrollment, continues to grow substantially. Last year, our faculty published 26 peer reviewed articles, and two of our clinical faculty, Professors Stephanie Baus and Heather Gillis, also defended their Ph.D. dissertations this year. Congrats to both Dr. Baus and Dr. Gillis.

Internationally, our relationship with the TATA Institute in Mumbai, India, where four students completed their fourth semester fieldwork last fall, continues to grow as four MSW students will again carry out their fieldwork in Mumbai this fall. Our students also will be working in Africa, Belize and Central America. Similarly, we were delighted to host two students from the TATA Institute for a block placement for the second, consecutive year.

As you are reading this, I am with 20 fourth semester MSW students in north India, marking the eighth consecutive year of the program as well as the largest group to participate. For three and a half weeks, we will be in Dharamsala, India, home of the Dalai Lama and Tibetan Government in Exile, learning about this unique culture and using this opportunity as a platform to inform our own social work practice and gain innumerable personal insights.

Locally, the past year saw the inaugural two-day conference, “Best Practices in Disaster Mental Health” of the newly developed Institute for Psychosocial Health, directed by Jane Parker. On the CE front, I am excited to welcome Parker Sternbergh, MSW ’05, who is now the assistant director of both the Porter-Cason Institute and our division of continuing education (both under the direction of Professor Richard Ager). I also want to welcome Joe Halm, our new full-time, marketing/communications coordinator. He is responsible for getting Postscripts to you and has made many exciting changes to our Web site with more to follow.

Finally, I look forward to our homecoming celebration which you can read about in this issue. During homecoming, we’re delighted to welcome and feature two prominent faculty from Sapir College in Israel where we have been developing a strong relationship. I always look forward to seeing our alumni and hearing about the important and exciting work in which you are engaged.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
For Baus, the trip also served as a chance to see what social work is like in Peru. “It is not very field-based,” she said, after visiting towns on the outskirts of Lima. “Traditionally, social work degree holders in Peru want to have an office in Lima doing some social service agency work.”

Baus added that many social services, such as soup kitchens, were provided via the community organizing together and running the service.

“It was a hands-on look at community organization in a setting where there were very few resources and what role that social work played as a profession,” she said.

The National Institutes of Health provided funding through a Framework for Global Health grant. The three-day workshop was packed with a combination of field visits and panel discussions. Moving forward, Gilkey hopes more collaborative efforts such as the Peru trip will aid TSSW and any schools or institutes involved.

“The challenge will be to participate in projects such as the Global Health Initiative at Tulane, and be our own best public relations expert,” Gilkey said. “We have to be more visible, more vocal, more valuable, more versatile and demonstrate to other disciplines that we have viable knowledge and skills that can not only assist in solving some of the global problems of today, but identify and/or create opportunities in the present and future designed to prevent such problems.”
Fenton’s Mystery Draws from Real Life

For as long as she can remember, Margaret Fenton has read mystery novels. The 1993 TSSW grad grew up reading the Hardy Boys and Trixie Belden, moving on to Agatha Christie and many others as an adult.

As of June 1, the Florence, Ala., native has also published her own book, Little Lamb Lost. But how did an English major, who earned a masters in social work, find her way to the publishing world?

The answer starts in Birmingham, Ala. After she moved there more than 10 years ago, a bookstore clerk suggested she join “Sisters in Crime,” a group for writers and fans. That’s where she met the late Anne George, who Fenton called “a supremely talented writer.”

“We were on our way to a meeting one night and I was babbling on about some book I’d read, so she asked me, if I loved them so much, why didn’t I try to write one,” Fenton recalled, adding she didn’t have a good answer.

At the time, she was working at the Alabama Department of Human Resource’s Child Welfare Department, and the book’s central theme popped into her head. “What if I had a protagonist who was a social worker? And she loses a client? It just went from there,” Fenton said.

The first-time fiction writer said the writing process was a joy especially because of her direct authoring style. “I don’t outline, I just sit down and type ‘Chapter One’ and go from there,” she said, adding that her former co-workers have given her great feedback on the book. After eight months of writing, it was done, and now the young scribe is working on a second novel about Claire Conover, which she hopes will turn into a lengthy series.

Little Lamb Lost centers on Claire, a Birmingham social worker who honestly believed she could make a difference in the world until she received the phone call she’d dreaded her entire career. One of her young clients, Michael, had been found dead and his mother, Ashley, had been arrested for his murder. Devastated but determined to discover where her instincts failed her, Claire vowed to find out the truth about what really happened to Michael. Fenton said the novel’s serious topic – a crime against a child – was a tough one to tackle.

“It took me a while to get up the courage to write this novel,” she said. “I had to get to a place where I could just write the book and not worry about the topic. Yes, the victim in this book is a young boy, but all the violence is off-screen, and the story really evolves as a result of his death.”

The third generation Tulane grad said her life experience along with her time at TSSW played a huge role in her life and the writing process.

“TSSW provided me with a valuable education and I was able to apply that to an amazing career. I started out in Mobile as a child therapist, then moved to Birmingham to do in-home family therapy. I was contracted by a local agency, JBS Mental Health Authority. I was housed in the DHR building for eight years, right there for the social workers to access at a moment’s notice. And without my time at DHR, well, this book never would have been written.”

As for the sequel, it is tentatively titled Little Girl Gone, and Fenton promises Claire along with the current host of characters will make a return. “We’ll have to see what happens with them. That will be an interesting question,” Fenton said.

The 264-page novel, published by Oceanview Publishing, is available at most local, independent bookstores as well as online at Amazon or Barnes and Noble.

Homecoming 2009 Features Alumni Reception, CEU Event

Work Student Scholarship Fund. Alumni will also have a chance to visit with Drs. Lander and Tal before the Saturday Homecoming Festivities as the school is hosting a public lecture at the Lavin-Bernick Center in the Stibbs Conference Room (Rm. 203) on the building’s second floor on Thursday, Oct. 8.

Drs. Lander and Tal will present an hour lecture followed by a 30-minute Q & A and discussion period. The lecture will begin at 7 p.m. and will focus on the topic of “Letting go in order to move on: The therapeutic value of forgiveness.” A reception with light refreshments will follow in the adjoining room and balcony area beginning at 8:30 p.m. Drs. Lander and Tal will be available for further discussion and conversation at the reception.

The event is free and open to all Tulane students and the general public, and the TSSW Alumni Association encourages all alumni interested in the subject to attend the public lecture to receive a preview of the what the presenters have to offer for the CEU event.

For more information or to register, visit tulane.edu/social-work or call 1-800-631-8234.
When Dottie Reese learned she would be one of four individuals honored for “exceptional civic and humanitarian contributions” with a Weiss Award in late April, she was humbled. But when she realized who was giving her the honor, it meant so much more.

The New Orleans Council for Community and Justice, formerly the National Conference of Christians and Jews, presented the award to Reese along with Tulane president Scott Cowen, Hornets owner George Shinn and community activist Seletha Smith Nagin during the 52 annual Weiss Awards, but Reese’s involvement with the group dated back to her teenage years.

“I was just so honored and very humbled,” she said. “It was actually a very personal award, which I didn’t even realize at the time. When I met with the executive director and she gave me the letter, I was just so touched. Growing up, I had been a part of a life changing experience as a teenager with the National Conference of Christians and Jews.”

That life changing experience came when she attended an Anytown USA Camp, a week-long event bringing high school students from all backgrounds together to spend a week talking about diversity and issues of discrimination such as race, ethnicity, gender and religion. In the awards banquet audience were recent Anytown campers, who had never actually heard a speech from any older Anytown alum, and then it hit her.

“When I saw that, I realized that my life had come full circle, and that many of the decisions I had made in life were a result of me having an awareness of the true value of respecting and appreciating differences,” she said, adding that her story actually led to some major gifts from other organizations in attendance to Anytown.

That single award brought Reese back to her beginnings, but her journey has been nothing short of adventurous. A 1979 TSSW graduate, she earned her Masters of Public Health a year later. With that wealth of knowledge, Reese started her career in the social services and health care field and earned her board certification a few years later.

She opened up a small, private practice in addition to working in health care administration shortly after her certification. Then came the beginnings of her consulting career, and now, she is a partner in the firm of DMM & Associates LLC, which has served numerous agencies including nonprofits, the CIA in Virginia, law firms, health care institutions, higher education and the Children’s Defense Fund.

“One of the things that I specialize in is strategic diversity management and cultural competency, so I still go into health care organizations as well as business and industry and provide education and training on those issues,” she said.

While Reese’s professional career was growing, her volunteer and community board member responsibilities continued to increase at a speedy pace. She has been the chairperson of the NASW Health Unit Chapter New Orleans, served on the national level with the American Hospital Association Society of Social Work Directors in Health Care, which evolved into the Society for Social Work Leadership in Health Care where she served on the board and chaired numerous committees. She also won her fair share of awards including the Dorothy Schental Leadership Award, YWCA Role Model of the Year and the New Orleans Medical Association Humanitarian and Community Service Award. She is also certified in Diversity Management and is on the faculty of Cornell University Diversity Management Studies Program and serves as the first social worker on the Board of Supervisors for Louisiana State University.

Dottie is also the mother of two sons — Justin, 27, a recent Loyola Law School graduate pursuing a Master of Law at Temple University in Philadelphia who recently finished the bar, and Jared, 24, a senior English major at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Ga., with an interest in film production. She is married to Civil District Court Judge Kern Reese.

But even with those successes in both the professional and personal arenas, Reese still credits her Tulane education for her professional success.

“My career was absolutely shaped by my experience at Tulane. It was shaped in the sense that it really prepared me to deal with the human behavior side of the work world,” she said.

“I realized very early on the importance of being able to respect differences and being able to integrate with other people to be able to better serve the community. Combining the lessons I learned in both my social work and public health studies helped me to better understand populations and working with people, so where I am today in my career is a result of all of those experiences.”
You never know who you might run into......

Stephanie A. Dopson and Allison French Patterson, both MSW '97, met again 12 years after graduation by accident on a Precept Ministries International Trip to Israel. Stephanie and Allison are seen in this photo in Eilat, Israel, which is known for its dairy products and dairy production for the entire country. Both shared memories and good news about their recent career moves.

After Hurricane Katrina, Allison relocated to Northern Louisiana and works for the Office for Addictive Disorders as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker while Stephanie works at the Centers for Disease Control in Pandemic Influenza and on the current H1N1 response.

In Loving Memory.....

Those who are no longer with us

Louise Grey, MSW ’54, passed away on May 25 at her home in Columbia, S.C. Ms. Grey suffered a massive stroke. She is survived by her brother, Hugh Grey, of Graham, N.C.

Joseph Calvin Gandolini, MSW ’66, passed away on June 10, in Madison, Miss. Joseph was retired from the social work field after having worked for more than 30 years in various Louisiana State and private agencies as a clinical social worker and mental health clinic administrator. He is survived by his wife, Gayle B. Gandolini.

Bryan Bell, husband of Rubie Bell (MSW ’50), passed away on March 4 at the age of 90. He was a lifelong resident of New Orleans and was a church activist and businessman. He received an undergraduate degree from Princeton and a master’s at Tulane.

Perhaps the most telling action about the couple’s grace and welcoming nature was represented in their so called ‘open door policy.’ When Mr. Bell was outdoors and saw curious onlookers near the couple’s Garden District home, he would invite them in for a tour. TSSW visiting professor Nadine Bean was a recipient of a tour although it was the circumstances that made it special. As Rubie was gathering items for Bryan’s service, she noticed Bean’s group. With her husband’s flag in her arms, she invited them in, just as her husband would have wanted.

Mr. Bell was a World War II veteran and received a Bronze Star, a Combat Infantry Badge, a Presidential Unit Citation and a Unit Award of Croix de Guerre with Palm. He was a founder of the D-Day Museum. He was a recipient of were The Times-Picayune Loving Cup and was actively engaged in Trinity Episcopal Church where he served as senior warden and senior counselor.

He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Rubie C. Bell; five children: Bee Gosnell (Peter), Bettina Larson (Gary), Bryan Bell, Jr. (Victoria), Beverly Bell, and Barbara Barrett (John); and 12 grandchildren.

The Power of Giving

As you read this, the fall semester is in full swing, the campus is bustling with activity, and social work students and faculty are immersing themselves in the field.

They are also benefiting from the generosity of friends and alumni like you.

Your support of the Tulane School of Social Work Annual Fund has enabled us to:

• Create a “smart classroom” via a vital technology upgrade in room 213;

• Increase learning outside of the classroom by sending distinguished faculty members and select students to conferences across the country; and

• Cultivate students’ analytical skills as they work with faculty members on cutting edge research projects.

We anticipate even greater successes this fiscal year, but we need your help to reach our goals of 525 donors and $74,750.

In previous columns, you have read about the importance of giving and the power of the $25 donation. You have also seen — as exemplified above — what we can achieve when we work together.

Now I invite you to demonstrate what we can really do.

If each of our alumni donates just $25, we would far surpass our dollar goal and would exceed our donor goal nearly ten-fold.

Imagine the impact that would have!

While the students and the faculty would be the direct beneficiaries, the school also would gain much through the admiration of our colleagues across the university and our peers throughout the country.

Indeed, just think about seeing an article in The Chronicle of Higher Education with the headline, “Tulane School of Social Work Shatters Fundraising Records.”

I realize that this is an ambitious plan, but I am confident that we will succeed. I’m an optimist, and I’m sure you are, too . . . after all, you’re a social worker.

Please lend your support, and please join us in October for our Homecoming/Reunion social and continuing education event — yet another example of a graduate’s generosity.

Lou Franchina is the school’s development officer. He may be reached directly at (504) 314-7308 or lfranch1@tulane.edu.
Dianne Brinker, LCSW, (Ph.D. ’72), is in private practice in the Virgin Islands. She works on two of those islands, St. Thomas and St. Crox.

Margo Richdale Case, (MSW ’73), is in private practice in psychotherapy and has specialized in geriatrics for the past 20 years. Margo and her husband, Frederick, moved from Mandeville to San Marcos, Texas, in 2004. Their daughter, Maris, married Jon Clegg on Nov. 3, 2007, and the young couple now resides in Austin, Texas.

Michael Francois, (MSW ’05), is currently working as a program supervisor and an employment assistance person at Evergreen Presbyterian Inc. in Hammond, La. Michael also has published a book entitled, “He disguised his DOUBLE-D,” which is a fictional novel about twin brothers, one of whom has a learning disability.

Mary C. Hodo, (MSW ’07), moved to Eagle River, Alaska, on May 2 to begin a new job with FOCUS Outreach, Inc. Mary is serving as the assistant director of their summer camp and director of their afterschool program. FOCUS is a non-profit agency that offers outreach services for special needs children/adolescents and their families.

Audrey Phillips Kahane, (Ph.D. ’45), is working in a small, private clinical practice. Prior to that, Audrey worked for Los Angeles County Adoption Services for 23 years. She has been published in several, local newspapers and writes an ongoing commentary several times a week. She also has four adult children as well as nine grandchildren.

Virginia Lee Nease, (MSW ’66), has been in private practice full-time since 1999 as a licensed marriage and family therapist. Prior to 1999, Virginia worked for 32 years at the Tidelands Mental Health Center while conducting a part-time private practice.

Michael B. Schwartz, (Ph.D. ’71), is practicing low-cost, non-governmental, non-corporate psychotherapy in Springfield, Ill. He is an emeritus associate professor at Southern Illinois University’s School of Medicine and continues to teach resident physicians in psychotherapy. After Tulane, Michael taught at Florida State for three years before coming to SIU for 31 years and was one of the founding administrators of suicide prevention programs at New York University – Bellevue and at Tulane.

Signe Whitson, (MSW ’97), is currently living in Allenton, Pa., and works as the program administrator for the Life Space Crisis Intervention Institute. She also wrote a book on the psychology of passive aggressive behavior entitled, “The Angry Smile: The Psychology of Passive Aggressive Behavior in Families, School and Workplaces, 2nd Edition.” It was published in December of 2008. She is also married and has two daughters, Hannah (5) and Elle (3).
As the world continues to go to a more and more digital medium, *Postscripts* and the Tulane School of Social Work will follow suit, but that doesn’t mean we’re going to leave our alums behind.

Beginning this Fall, alums will have a very important choice — to go digital or not to go digital — but remember this is your choice. The School of Social Work Alumni Association will begin to offer more services via our Web site (tulane.edu/socialwork) and via email newsletters and messages to our alums.

So here’s the deal — we need to know how you want to receive *Postscripts* and other alumni correspondence in the future. You can continue to receive all of your correspondence via U.S. mail or switch to email for newsletters, homecoming invitations and even *Postscripts*, beginning in 2010.

If you choose to keep receiving *Postscripts* via the U.S. mail, you need to make sure that your mailing address is up to date so that you’ll receive the latest news about the school and your fellow alums in a timely fashion. And if you move, please let us know! It is as simple as a phone call to our office (1-800-631-8234) or visiting the alumni section on the TSSW Web page and updating your info via our alumni contact form.

One additional incentive to update your contact info comes from the alumni office. If you update your info before Oct. 1, you will automatically be eligible to win a fabulous New Orleans Weekend Getaway package. The prize will be awarded on Oct. 7. Update your info at tulane.edu/alumni/updateyourinfo.cfm.

This fall you’ll also receive a postcard reminder to update your preferences via our web site or by calling the school. So check your mailboxes and your email often for news, improvements and new features brought to you in the coming months. With your feedback, we know this transition will be smooth and provide our alumni with the latest news about their school in the medium they’re most likely to enjoy.